

Studio Sergison
Autumn Semester 2009

A house in Bloomsbury



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Aerial photograph
Bloomsbury area highlighted



Introduction

Jonathan Sergison

The studio will continue to investigate an urban architecture through the study of normative programmes. London will again be the setting for projects.

In the winter semester the studio will work on a number of small sites (existing voids) in Bloomsbury, in central London. Projects will explore proposals for an interior architecture in a manner that considers the notion of inside to outside, or a room's relationship to the city, emphasising the relationship housing programmes have to public/private space.

The studio will continue to be supported by lectures and seminars by invited experts.

A Georgian house on Doughty Street, Bloomsbury

When we describe a domestic interior, we employ a highly determined phraseology to categorise the activities that will take place in a particular room. The room itself may be used in a way it was not originally intended for. The rooms of Georgian houses indisputably prove this point: a crèche in the basement of a house where the servants' quarters or kitchen were; a bedroom on the first floor of a house converted into flats, where the reception room was; the lecture room of a university department where, in the original house, guests would have been received.

What is being described here is the ability of a building with a carefully worked out programme to transform over many years and adequately absorb very different uses than originally intended.

What remains a constant are the windows, or a room's relationship to the outside. The interior decoration of a room will change according to what function it is used for, along with the arrangement of furniture. The city outside will constantly adjust and transform itself. And yet, while everything may appear to be in a state of flux, as architects, we always conceive our work for a given moment. The image you project for the room in a building you are making is fixed.

This semester we are interested in exploring the tension that seems to exist between the determining character of (interior) architecture and the need to accommodate the vagaries of inhabitation, with its unpredictable character.

The project you make should be very clear in terms of the things you determine or prescribe and what you leave contingent. It might be helpful to consider in terms of your project the extent to which the interior can be understood as a background. Emphasis will be placed on a precise description of the atmosphere the rooms you are making have and great care will be needed to render or represent them accurately.

When we think of a room, we need to understand its relationship to its neighbouring room as a spatial matrix. We are also interested in the relationship this interior arrangement has to the outside. The city is ever present and is both inside and outside.

1
Dorral CDN 2006, (Marc Pimlott)

2
Skogaholm Manor, Narke, Skansen, Sweden, 1790 (Stephen Bates)

3
Milan Narotsky apartment, Barcelona, Liebman Villavecchia

4
Red House, Chelsea, London, Tony Fretton architects, 2001 (Helen Binet)

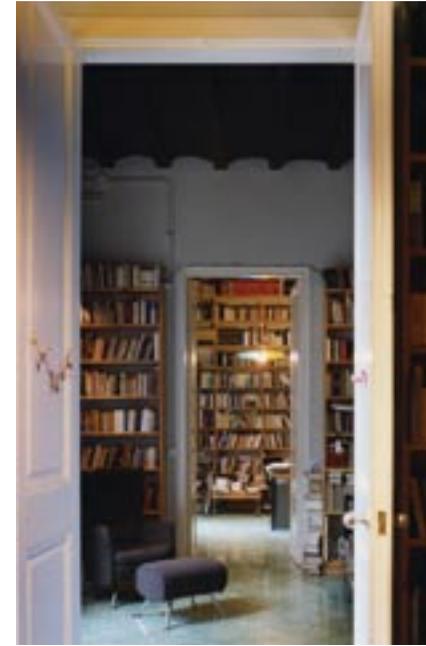
5
Bar Canigo, Gracia, Barcelona, 1991 (Stephen Bates)



1



2 3



4



5

Your building should be a careful addition to a site or neighbourhood, but should be conceived so that the tension between inside and outside is precisely defined.

Model made to represent interior spaces at 1:10.
The status it has as a physical object is accidental



Context: Bloomsbury

Bloomsbury is an area of central London in the south of the London Borough of Camden, developed by the Russell family in the 17th and 18th centuries into a fashionable residential area. It is notable for its array of garden squares, literary connections (exemplified by the Bloomsbury Group), and numerous hospitals and academic institutions.

While Bloomsbury was not the first area of London to have acquired a formal square, Southamptton Square (now named Bloomsbury Square), which was laid out by Thomas Wriothesley, 4th Earl of Southampton in 1660, was the first square to actually be named thus.

Bloomsbury is home to the British Museum, the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, and the British Medical Association. It is also home to the University of London's Senate House Library, its central departments (including the School of Advanced Study), and several of its colleges (University College London, Birkbeck, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, School of Pharmacy, School of Oriental and African Studies and the Royal Veterinary College).

Notable hospitals include Great Ormond Street Hospital, the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, University College Hospital and the Royal London Homoeopathic Hospital.

Bloomsbury was formerly home to the British Library, housed within the British Museum; the Library moved in 1997 to larger premises nearby, next to St Pancras railway station in Somers Town.

History

The earliest record of what would become Bloomsbury is the 1086 Domesday Book, which records that the area had vineyards and "wood for 100 pigs". But it is not until 1201 that the name Bloomsbury is first noted, when William de Blemond, a Norman landowner, acquired the land.

At the end of the 14th century Edward III acquired Blemond's manor, and passed it on to the Carthusian monks of the London Charterhouse, who kept the area mostly rural.



1
Historical map of Bloomsbury

2
Bedford Square, Bloomsbury. The finest and most complete example of a Georgian Square

3
Byng Place, Bloomsbury



2



3

In the 16th century, with the Dissolution of the Monasteries, King Henry VIII took the land back into the possession of the Crown, and granted it to Thomas Wriothesley, 1st Earl of Southampton.

In the early 1660s, the Earl of Southampton constructed what eventually became Bloomsbury Square. The area was laid out mainly in the 18th century, largely by landowners such as Wriothesley Russell, 3rd Duke of Bedford, who built Bloomsbury Market, which opened in 1730. The major development of the squares that we see today started in about 1800 when Francis Russell, 5th Duke of Bedford removed Bedford House and developed the land to the north with Russell Square as its centrepiece.

Geography

Bloomsbury has no official boundaries, but can be roughly defined as the square bounded by Tottenham Court Road to the west, Euston Road to the north, Gray's Inn Road to the east, and either High Holborn or the thoroughfare formed by New Oxford Street, Bloomsbury Way and Theobald's Road to the south. Bloomsbury merges gradually with Holborn in the south and with St Pancras in the north-east and Clerkenwell in the south-east.

The area is bisected north to south by the main Southampton Row-Woburn Place thoroughfare, which contains several large tourist hotels and links Tavistock Square and Russell Square – the central points of Bloomsbury. The road runs from Euston and Somers Town in the north to Holborn in the south.

The area east of Southampton Row-Woburn Place includes the Brunswick shopping centre and cinema, and Coram's Fields recreation area. The area to the north of Coram's Fields consists mainly of blocks of flats, built both as private and social housing, and is generally considered part of St Pancras or King's Cross rather than north-eastern Bloomsbury. The area to the south is generally less residential, containing several hospitals, including Great Ormond Street, and gradually becomes more commercial in character as it approaches the boundary with Holborn at Theobald's Road.

The area west of Southampton Row-Woburn Place is notable for its concentration of academic establishments, museums, and formal squares. It is this side that contains the British Museum and the central departments and colleges of the University of London, including Birkbeck College, UCL, the School of Oriental and African Studies, and the University of London's School of Advanced Study. The main north-south road in west Bloomsbury is Gower Street which is a one-way road running south from Euston Road towards Shaftesbury Avenue in Covent Garden, becoming Bloomsbury Street when it passes to the west of the British Museum.

An example of surface articulation in a terrace of Mansion blocks, Museum Street, Bloomsbury





1



2

1/2
St Georges Gardens, Bloomsbury.
A former graveyard now used as
a valuable urban amenity

3
An example of subtle variation
within a strategy of repetition

4
A street displaying a form of
proximity that is both intense and
reasonable

5
An urban curiosity; a remaining
fragment or incomplete project?



4



3



5



1



2



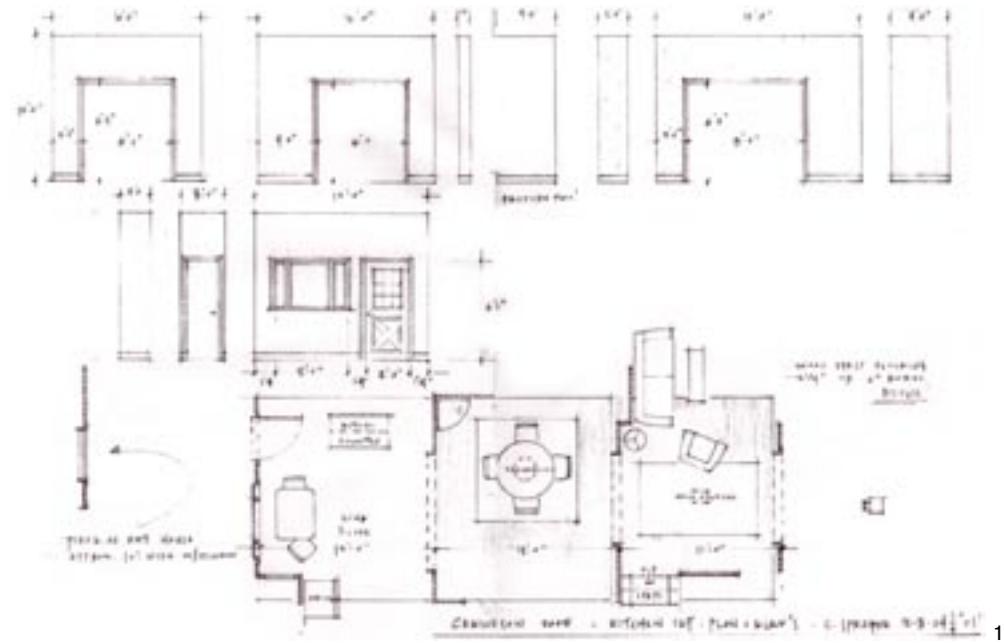
3



- 1
John Street, Bloomsbury
- 2
Rear entrance to the church
at Byng Place
- 3
Duke Street, Bloomsbury
- 4
A communal garden arranged
in a picturesque manner

First exercise: A study of atmosphere

Your first piece of work will be to make a study of an interior represented in a painting. You should choose one that moves or excites you and one that you wish to explore. A 1:10 model should be made to accurately recreate the atmosphere of this space. The model should then be recorded through photography. The photograph will be the thing that represents this study, and the model itself should be only understood as a tool or a means of obtaining an image, much like in a Thomas Demand photograph.

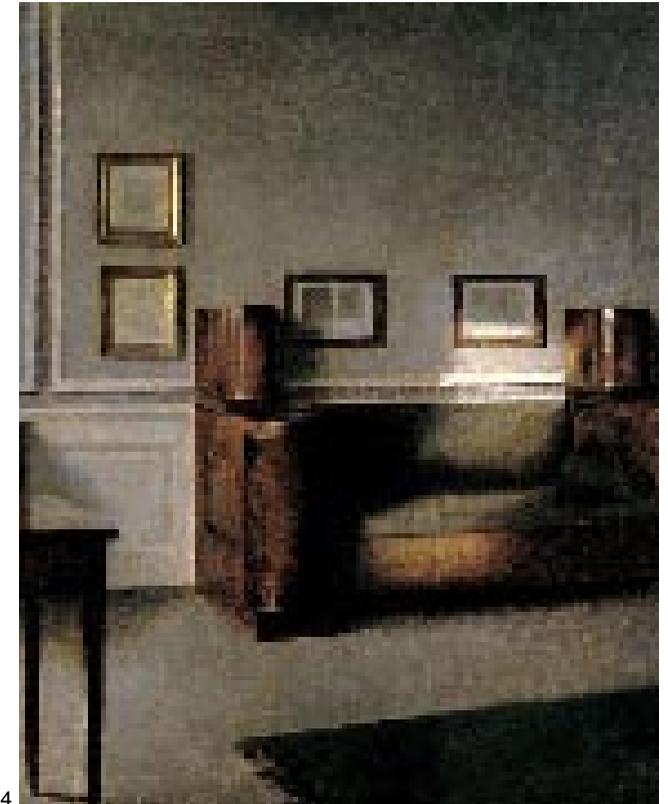


1
Drawing for a stage set, 2005,
Gregory Crewdson

2
Zeichensaal, 1996, Thomas
Demand

3
Productionset for a Photography of
Gregory Crewdson, 2003

4
Sofa, 1905, Vilhelm Hammershoi



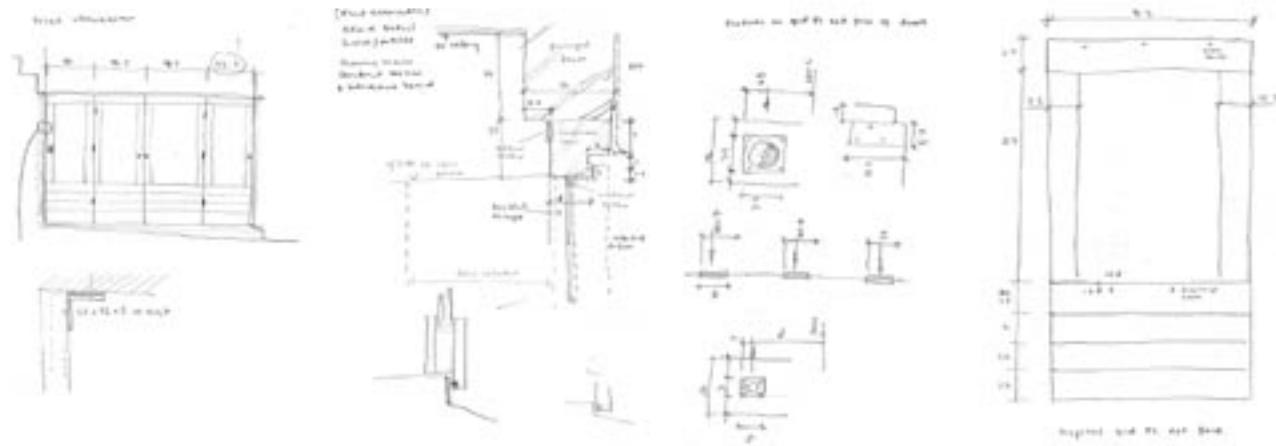
Second exercise: Survey

We would like you to undertake an extremely careful and analytical study of a façade of a building in Bloomsbury. This exercise will begin on your study trip to London and be presented one week after your return.

We have selected 30 buildings that are worthy of careful study. This piece of work should be understood as an exercise that will assist your understanding of London's local construction tradition. In addition, it will help you to know the size of real things.

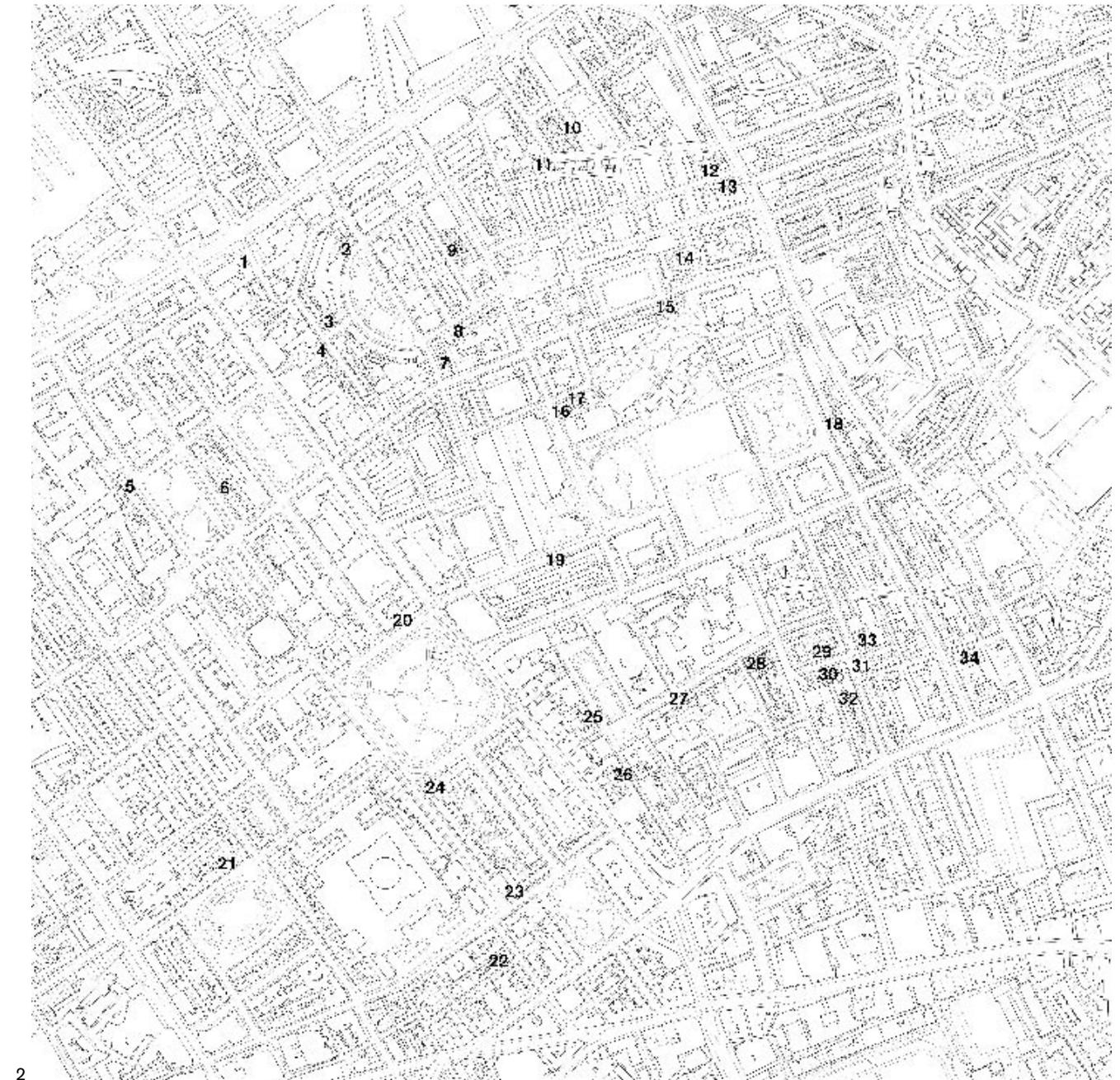
When you come to design your building and you are questioning how big to make a window in a wall, you will be able to refer to this study and react to something you know. If your building is a brick building, your survey exercise could inform the choice, size, coursing and finish of the brickwork you use in your project.

Your survey should be drawn at a scale of 1:20. When you are in London, you should make a very careful photographic survey of the Building you have chosen. You will also need to measure it and make drawings to inform your work.



1

1
Survey drawings of the Upper
Lawn Pavilion, Stephen Bates



2

2
Map of Bloomsbury showing the
sites to be surveyed

Reference buildings



1 2 3



7 8



9



4



5 6



10



11 12



1
Sir John Soane
Sir John Soane's Museum
13 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London WC2
1792–1794

2
Prewett Bizley Architects
Newington Green House
London
2005

3
Tony Fretton Architects
The Red House
Tite Street, Chelsea, London
2001

4
Tony Fretton Architects
House and studio for
Brad Lochore
Old Nichol Street, London E2
2007

5
Sergison Bates architects
Urban housing
85 Shepherdess Walk
London N1
2002

6
Sergison Bates architects
Studio House
29 Coate Street, London E2
2006

7
Stephen Taylor Architects
Three small houses
Chance Street, London E2
2004

8
Stephen Taylor Architects
Mixed Use New Build
Charlotte Road, London EC2
2008

9
Russell Jones Architects
House
Garway Road, London W2
2005

10
Robert Adam
Chandos House
2 Queen Anne Street,
London W1
1769–1771

11
William Russell
The Tin House
Bacon Street, London E2
2001

12
Adjaye Associates
The Dirty House
Chance Street, London E2
2002

Programme 2009

Date	Activity	Event	Assignment
17 September	Introduction to semester	Jonathan presents studio and winter semester programme Introduction to studio assistants Georg Nickisch (GN) and Federico Tranfa (FT)	
18 September	Start of studio project	Project briefing Jonathan Sergison present the work of the semester Presentation of 'illustration architecture' by Georg Nickisch	Book tickets and accommodation for London field trip
24–25 September	AAM closed		
1–2 October	Reviews	Review of room study with Tony Fretton Presentation on 'how to make a survey of a building' by Jonathan Sergison	1:10 model photographed
8–11 October	Field visit to London	Please see separate programme for detailed information	Survey of housing projects and site visits
15–16 October	Reviews	Review of survey work Project briefing Presentation of '2 houses in London' by Jonathan Sergison	1:20 survey drawing of Bloomsbury building
22–23 October		Tutorials Presentation on 'ideas and houses' by Federico Tranfa Review of 1:50 models Project briefing	1:50 model of building with in context
29–30 October	Reviews	Tutorials	1:50 model
5–6 November		Review of interior models Briefing on 1:20 drawing work	Model of 3 rooms 1:10
12–13 November	Reviews	Presentation on 'how to draw 1:20' by Jonathan Sergison.	Hand in model of 3 rooms (1:10) photograph enhanced with Photoshop printed at A1

Date	Activity	Event	Assignment
19–20 November		Tutorials	Drawings at 1:20 (plans, sections and elevations)
26–27 November		Tutorials	Drawings at 1:20 (plans, sections and elevations)
3–4 December	Reviews	1:20 drawings Briefing on 1:20 model Jonathan Sergison, 'How to make a 1:20 model with a concept'	Hand in of drawings
10–11 December		Tutorials	1:20 model
14–15 December	Final review	Invited critics	1:20 model Images of interior model 1:20 drawings PowerPoint presentation of project and print out at A4 of content of digital presentation and CD of work to an agreed format

Please note:
Reference will play a role at each stage of the project and it will be expected that, where relevant, visual or written reference material will support the presentation of work

Reading list

The Architecture of the City
Aldo Rossi, MIT Press 1982

Changing the Art of Inhabitation
Alison and Peter Smithson, Artemis, London 1994

As Found – The discovery of the ordinary
Claude Lichtenstein and Thomas Schreggenberge (eds), Lars Müller 2001

Species of Spaces and other pieces
Georges Perec, Penguin 1974

A Guide to the Architecture of London
Edward Jones & Christopher Woodward, Weidenfeld & Nicholson 1983

Papers 2
Jonathan Sergison and Stephen Bates, London 2007

Words and Buildings
Adrian Forty, Thames and Hudson, London 2000

Ornament and Crime
Adolf Loos, Ariadne

London: the biography
Peter Ackroyd, Chatto and Windus 2000

Georgian London
John Summerson, Yale University Press 2003

Without and within
Mark Pimlott, episode publishers 2008

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